

Week of June 10, 2002: MaineDOT Flash Facts

Topic: Driver Distractions

Monday:

Openers:

- More than 14,000 crashes each year in Maine are due to Driver Inattention or Distraction.
- Driver Distraction or Inattention cause nearly 50 deaths and 7,000 injuries each year.

-Everything is at our fingertips in today's vehicles. (Today's vehicles are "rolling living rooms".)

Vehicles now have:

- CD players
- Cellular telephones
- Cupholders-to make drinking (and eating) easy.

Don't let these conveniences become driving distractions.

- Avoid activities that take your mind and eyes off the road.
- The car is not the place to make up time by tending to other daily needs. "Just Drive" -leave multi-tasking to other times of the day.
- Watch for others who may not be paying attention.
- Drive at a reasonable speed.

Wednesday

Openers/Facts:

- Driving is a full time mental and physical task.
- At 50 miles per hour, your vehicle will travel 150 feet in just two seconds. (the amount of time you might be spending finding that CD or looking at the map)

Safety Tips

- Be aware that road and traffic conditions are constantly changing.
- Keep your eyes and mind continually on the road.
- If something is going to take your attention away from driving, pull safely off the road first. (not a shoulder)

Friday:

Opener/Fact:

- About 40% of Maine's crashes are caused by driver distraction or inattention. (We talked earlier in the week about vehicle conveniences sometimes causing a distraction.)

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There are other distractions that can cause a lapse of driving attention:

- Reaching in the back seat for something you need.
- Spotting something or someone on the side of the road.
- Talking with those in the backseat or along side you.
- Reading a map.
- Dealing with spilled food or drinks.
- Putting on make-up or shaving.
- Reaching for dropped coins.

- Driving is a full time job. Do not let other activities interfere.
- Your mind should be focused on driving aspects - so you are ready to react should something change on the road.
- Your eyes should be regularly scanning the road- well ahead; along the roadsides; and behind you.

When driving...Just drive.